

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** the claims as shown below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application.

1 – 26. Cancelled

27. (New) An apparatus for dyeing fiber or filament, comprising

a plurality of pre-wetting troughs;

a plurality of dye baths;

a drying arrangement;

a supporting system comprising two porous fabric belts configured to form a fabric roll for carrying fibers or filaments; and

guide rollers and nip rollers configured to guide said fabric roll along with fibres or filaments through the pre-wetting troughs, the dye baths and the drying arrangement,

wherein said supporting system is configured to support the fibers or filaments to take up tension between the guiding rollers, thereby allowing the fibers to flow freely for dying fibers or filaments continuously and homogeneously without being disturbed by the tension.

28. (New) An apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein the belt is a synthetic or natural fabric.

29. (New) An apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein the belt is a blended fabric.

30. (New) An apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein the supporting system is inert to dyeing.

31. (New) A method for dyeing fibers or filaments comprising:

supporting fibers on a supporting system having two porous fabric belts and simultaneously forming a porous fabric roll from the two porous fabric belts;

carrying the fibers or filaments on the porous fabric roll;

guiding the porous fabric roll carrying the fibers or filaments through pre-wetting troughs for pre-wetting the fibers or filaments, dye baths for dyeing the fibres or filaments, and a drying arrangement for drying the fibres or filaments; and

separating dried fibers or filaments from the porous fabric roll,

wherein supporting the fibers on the supporting system allows the fibers to flow freely for dying fibers or filaments continuously and homogeneously without being disturbed by tension.

32. (New) A method for dyeing fibers as claimed in claim 31, wherein the fibers or filaments for dyeing include fibers or filaments selected from the group consisting of cotton and other natural fibers, man made fibers, synthetic fibers, man made filaments, synthetic filaments, and a combination thereof.

33. (New) A method for dyeing fibers as claimed in claim 31, wherein the fiber is cotton fiber.

34. (New) A method for dyeing fibers as claimed in claim 31, wherein the fibers are carried in either a loose form, a sliver form, an intermediate form, or a rope form.

35. (New) A method for dyeing fiber as claimed in claim 31, wherein the dye is selected from the group consisting of indigo, vat dye, sulfur dye, reactive dye, and a combination thereof.

36. (New) A method for dyeing fiber as claimed in claim 31, wherein the fibers or filaments are indigo dyed.